

The 2020 Hurricane Season is Here, Time to Prepare

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U.S. Virgin Islands – Hurricane season officially began June 1, now is the time for all Virgin Islanders to take steps to prepare themselves and their loved ones. Build a kit, make a plan and stay informed.

“As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s certainly understandable that people may feel fearful and anxious about the threat of hurricanes this season,” said FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer William L. Vogel. “Of course, we can’t stop hurricanes, but we can help reduce anxiety by being well prepared. We urge people to plan ahead and educate themselves.”

Residents should prepare to be self-sufficient in the immediate aftermath of a hurricane and take steps to protect their property. Those with disabilities and others with access and functional needs may have [additional considerations](#).

How do you prepare?

Build a kit. Families should be prepared to shelter in a secure and safe location for up to 10 days after a disaster. Remember roads may be impassable, gas stations and grocery stores could be closed, power may be out, and communications could be interrupted.

- Store a gallon of water for each person per day for 10 days, for drinking and sanitation.
- Gather a 10-day supply of non-perishable food and medications.
- Have enough antibiotic ointment, hygienic products, diapers and wipes available.



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- Store supplies to meet the needs of individual family members, including infants and young children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and pets or service animals.
- Since the spring of 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has recommended people include additional items in their kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus or other viruses and the flu, items can include:
 - Cloth face coverings (for everyone ages 2 and above), soap, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces.
- Protect important documents such as vital records, insurance policies, medical information and property and financial records, by storing copies in a safe deposit box or another location separate from your home. These items may be necessary for survivors who could be eligible to apply for disaster assistance.

Make a Family Communications Plan. Identify alternate ways of staying in touch with loved ones.

- Choose an out of town friend or relative as a point of contact.
- Ensure children have emergency contacts memorized or saved in a secure place.
- Determine a safe, familiar place the family can go for protection or to reunite.
- Make sure the location is in a central and accessible location for all family members, including family members with disabilities.
- If you have pets or service animals, make sure the location is animal-friendly.

For more information on making a family communication plan go to [Family Communication Plan](#). Stay Informed. Listen to local officials' bulletins for the most up-to-date information before, during and after a disaster. It's a good idea to have a battery or solar powered radio to receive disaster notices and updates.

Find more information on how to prepare at [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

Harden and Protect Your Property. Virgin Islanders should also take steps to protect their homes.

- Prepare to store anything from your property that could be picked up by hurricane winds and turned into a harmful object.



- Trim trees to remove dead limbs and secure rain gutters and downspouts.
- Make sure porches, decks or sheds are sound and firmly attached.
- Fasten down roofs with hurricane straps or clips and install strong bolts at the top and bottom of exterior doors. Buy or make storm shutters for windows.

Keep your home and vehicle insured against wind and flood damage. Also, remember to update your property insurance to cover current construction costs and be aware that a property insurance policy does not offer coverage for flood damage. For more information about getting flood insurance, visit [floodsmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov).

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